

# Nonverbal Communication

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## OBJECTIVES / RATIONALE

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Research indicates that more time is spent communicating nonverbally than verbally and nonverbal messages carry more meaning than verbal messages. It is important to be aware how nonverbal messages are perceived by others. The student will examine nonverbal forms of communication, functions, characteristics, and interpretation, improve nonverbal communication skills and to adapt appropriate communications to the needs of the individual in a diverse society.

TEKS 121.3 (c) 2D

TAKS ELA 4

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## KEY POINTS

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- I. Nonverbal communication- all messages that are not expressed as words
- II. Physical Behaviors - any movement of face, hands, feet, trunk, or other body parts that communicate a message
  - A. Types of physical behaviors
    - 1. facial expressions - configurations of the face that may repeat, contradict, or are unrelated to the verbal cues - the major aspect is eye movement (establishes relationships) - used to demonstrate interest and understanding in the interaction or to serve as feedback
    - 2. eye contact - serves to seek feedback, inform others to speak signals the nature of a relationship, compensates for increased physical distance, establishes rapport - important for positive communication with patients - there are many cultural differences to be aware of such as some cultures avoid eye contact and children are taught not to look adults in the eye out of respect
    - 3. posture and gait - project strong nonverbal messages - should be alert; weight distributed evenly on both feet
    - 4. gestures - used to clarify, describe, reinforce, emphasize or get attention
  - B. Classification of Physical Behaviors:
    - 1. emblems - directly translate words or phrases (gestures)
    - 2. illustrators - reinforces verbal messages (pointing and shaking your finger to emphasize a point)
    - 3. affect displays - express emotions and feelings ( facial and body movements)
    - 4. regulators - controls the interaction with another (eye contact, gestures, head movements)
    - 5. adapters - satisfies a need, puts at ease (wringing of hands when nervous)
- III. Vocal behaviors / voice inflections - reinforces the meaning of the message characteristics of voice:
  - A. pitch - used to communicate fine shades of meaning or emotions

- B. range - communicates enthusiasm -use the entire range of your voice to avoid monotone
  - C. volume - changes in loudness are used to emphasize specific ideas - we often think of loudness as a means of emphasis; however, a decrease in loudness is often a better means of emphasis. Lowering the voice at strategic points causes the listener to strain to hear what is being said - resulting in closer attention to what is being said
  - D. rate / pace - depends on personality of speaker, emotional state, the situation, the mood of the audience, and the subject of the speech.
  - E. quality - a rich, mellow quality is ideal - unpleasant qualities include: breathiness, hoarseness, harshness, throatiness, nasality
- IV. Space - the amount of distance put between a person and others sends strong messages about thoughts and reactions.
- A. personal distance - closer space is reserved for more intimate interaction and the farther space is impersonal (18 " - 4 ft)
  - B. social distance - for business transactions (4-12 ft)
  - C. public distance - public speaking and ceremonies -allows many people to see the individual (12-25 ft)
  - D. influences on space:
    1. status
    2. culture
    3. content of interaction
    4. gender
    5. age
- V. Artifactual communication - use of material cues such as
- A. color
  - B. clothing, body adornments, possessions which are used to communicate information about age, gender, status, personality, and relationships (clothing, jewelry, hair style, bookbags)
  - C. space decoration - for example, a teen's bedroom
  - D. smell communication
- VI. Touch - one of the most personal and powerful means of communication. The kind and amount of touching that is appropriate varies greatly with culture, family background, age, gender.
- A. Meanings of touch - the meaning of a particular touch depends on the type of touch, the situation in which the touch occurs, who is doing the touching, and the cultural background of those involved.
  - B. Appropriateness of touch
  - C. Touch avoidance
  - D. Touch and the healing process
- VII. Nonverbal messages are used to accomplish social functions such as:
- A. communicating relationship status
  - B. communicating emotions
  - C. enhancing persuasive power
  - D. achieving understanding

- E. regulating conversations
- VIII. Nonverbal communication adds to verbal interactions by complementing, repeating, regulating, and substituting for words.
  - A. complimenting - complete, describe, or compliment verbal interactions
  - B. repeating - expresses the same message as the verbal interactions
  - C. regulating - controlling the flow of verbal interactions
  - D. substituting - used when it is impossible, inappropriate or undesirable to speak
    - replaces verbal messages with nonverbal signals to exchange ideas
- IX. Characteristics of Nonverbal Communications
  - A. constantly occurring
  - B. dependent on context - without understanding the context in which the nonverbal communication occurs it is impossible to tell what it means
  - C. more believable than verbal communication
  - D. primary means of expression - almost all feelings and attitudes are expressed through nonverbal behaviors

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### ACTIVITIES

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- I. Arrange in order by birthdates utilizing nonverbal communication. (Suggest students start with the year of birth. All students participate to accomplish the goal. Discuss the barriers encountered in completing the task.)
- II. Brainstorm strategies used in a health care setting to minimize and overcome communication barriers.
- III. Role play patient scenarios using effective communication strategies (language barriers, identifying emotions, hearing impaired, vision impaired).

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### MATERIALS/RESOURCES

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#### **Role Play Rubric**

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### ASSESSMENT

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#### **Role Play Rubric**

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### ACCOMMODATIONS

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For reinforcement, students will role play emotions that express nonverbal communication (fear, anger, pain).

For enrichment, student will develop a video of nonverbal communication scenarios to be evaluated by class.